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ONI DIRECT CONTRIBUTION TO NIB-34
SPAIN'S POTENTIALITIES IN WESTERN DEFENSES, II. C.

Since the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39, the tremendous strides made in the methods and techniques of naval warfare - particularly under the impetus of World War II - have far exceeded Spain's capacity to keep pace with them. A fairly ambitious destroyer and escort vessel replenishment program adopted during those war years is still far from fulfillment and is subject to continuing delays because of lack of raw materials and inability to import certain critical items from abroad. Quite realistically, Spain has given higher priority to merchant marine construction and naval base development, than to any immediate enlargement of her fleet, probably awaiting more propitious circumstances.

// In effective or potentially effective ships, Spain currently has: 1 CA, 3 CL, 1 CLAA, 15 DD, 3 SS, 9 PG, 6 CM and 9 AM, besides a limited number of coastal warfare type craft. By contrast to most other western continental European navies, this force is fairly well balanced and homogeneous for its size. The relatively high average age of its vessels is partly off-set by good maintenance and the fact that task force type of operational requirements - as understood in the USN, are not contemplated.

Basic training and theoretical appreciation of the elements of modern naval warfare are of a high order. By 1935-39 standards, combat readiness and effectiveness are good. Eye witnesses of recent large scale exercises testify to the high order of seamanship and ship handling displayed by all participating vessels.

Principal deficiencies revolve around the lack of modern weapons and equipment, which seriously restricts training, development and the accumulation of operational experience with modern methods and techniques. The absence of a naval air arm is another handicap which no amount of theoretical study or simulation in exercises can overcome. //

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